

## **REMARKS**

### **I. Introduction**

Claims 15 and 18 to 28 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

### **II. Rejection of Claims 15 and 18 to 28 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)**

Claims 15 and 18 to 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,276,339 ("Shebert, Jr. et al."). It is respectfully submitted that Shebert, Jr. et al. does not anticipate these claims for at least the following reasons.

Claim 15 relates to a support element for mutually bracing a fuel injector and a fuel-distributor line, including: at least a first portion for bracing against the fuel injector; and at least a second portion for bracing against the fuel-distributor line. The support element is adapted to space the fuel injector and the fuel-distributor line apart from one another in a manner that is free of radial forces, the support element includes a clamp which is braced against a shoulder of the fuel injector on one side and against a shoulder of the fuel-distributor line on another side, and the support element includes tabs that are elastically deformable in an axial direction of the fuel injector and the fuel distributor line.

Although Applicants may not agree with the merits of the rejection, to facilitate matters, claim 15 has been amended to recite that **the support element includes tabs that are integrally formed with the support element and are elastically deformable in an axial direction of the fuel injector and the fuel distributor line**. Shebert, Jr. et al. does not disclose, or even suggest, at least the above-mentioned feature. Shebert, Jr. et al. describes a spring clip assembly (123) for connecting a fuel injector (122) to a fuel rail assembly (121). The spring clip assembly (123) includes a spring clip (110) and a spring means (124) that may be a plurality of disk springs, a helical coil compression spring or other means for biasing fuel injector (122) and fuel rail assembly (121). The spring clip (110) includes elongate fingers (115) and elongate fingers (114), which engage with fuel rail assembly (121) and fuel injector (122), respectively, and hold spring means (124) between fuel rail assembly (121) and fuel injector (122) in a prestressed manner,

such that the fuel injector (122) and fuel rail assembly (121) are held together and the fuel injector (122) is pressed against a cylinder head. However, elongate fingers (114), which, according to the figure on page 3 of the Office Action, the Office Action apparently considers to constitute tabs, are not elastically deformable in an axial direction of the fuel injector (122) and the fuel rail assembly (121), but are only capable of deflecting radially outward to receive spring means (124) and engage with fuel injector (122). In addition, elongate fingers (115) are also not elastically deformable in an axial direction of the fuel injector (122) and the fuel rail assembly (121), but are only capable of deflecting radially outward to engage with flats (126) on fuel rail assembly (121). Furthermore, although spring means (124) may be elastically deformable in a radial direction, the spring means (124) is not a tab and is not integrally formed with the spring clip (110). Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Shebert, Jr. et al. does not anticipate claim 15 for at least these reasons.

As for claims 18 to 28, which ultimately depend from claim 15 and therefore include all of the features of claim 15, it is respectfully submitted that Shebert, Jr. et al. does not anticipate these dependent claims for at least the reasons set forth above.

In view of all of the foregoing, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

### III. Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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